Article captioned 'From dust to dust'

2491. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to an article which appeared in the Indian Express of the 13th September, 1987 uder the caption 'From dust to dust' to the effect that hundred of workers have died or are doomed to die of diseases contracted while shaping stones in semi-precious stone industry of Gujarat; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) what steps Government have taken to help the workers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A team of officers from the Directorate General of Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes (DGEASLI), Bombay was deputed to make an on-the-spot assessment of health status of the workers of the semi-precious stone-cutting industry in Shakarpur near Cambay in Gujarat. The team was assisted by the officers of the Government of Gujarat. The team found that few units come under the purview of the Factories Act as these employ less than ten workers. The concentration of dust exceeded the permissible limit value in most of the operations carried out in the units. The workers did not also use proper protective equipment. The team was of the view that the working conditions could cause occupational diseases such as pneumoconoisis and other respiratory diseases. It noted the prevalence of respiratory diseases including tuberculosis in the area. No women or children were seen working in the process by the export team.

The team has recommended that the management should be persuaded to provide local exhaust ventilation, enclosures for machinery and personal protective equipment. Training programmes should be organised for workers for appreciation of health hazards and the means for their prevention and control. It has also suggested that a detailed study should be conducted on the prevalence of occupational diseases in this area.

The recommendations of the team of exports are being communicated to the Government of Gujarat. The Directorate General of Factory Advice Service and Labour Institute (DGFASLI) will render necessary assistance to the State Government in the matter.

Misuse of terrorists and disruptive activities (Prevention) Act

2492. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Govnrnment have received reports regarding misuse of Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987 in different States, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) the steps taken to check the abuse of the Act?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir. In respect of Government of Gujarat only.

(b) As and when complaints regarding misuse of the Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act are received from a particular State, the matter is taken up with that State to ensure that there is no misuse of the provisions of the Act.

Problems of handloom weavers

2493. SHRI TALARI MANOHAR: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to conduct an indepth study of the problems of handloom weavers in our country, and

(b) if so, what could be the mode of such a study?